



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
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MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION C  
MAJCOMs/FOAs/DRUs

FROM: Acting Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

SUBJECT: Air Force Guidance Memorandum, Personal Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication

ACCESSIBILITY: Publications and forms are available for downloading or ordering on the e-Publishing website at [www.e-Publishing.af.mil](http://www.e-Publishing.af.mil).

RELEASABILITY: There are no releasability restrictions on this publication.

By Order of the Secretary of the Air Force, this guidance memorandum outlines policy on personal use of social media and electronic communication. Compliance with this memorandum is mandatory. To the extent its directions are inconsistent with other Air Force publications, the information herein prevails IAW AFI 33-360, Publications and Forms Management.

This publication implements Air Force Policy Directive 36-29, Military Standards. It applies to all military members of the Regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard. **Failure to observe the prohibitions and mandatory provisions in paragraph 2 of this publication by Regular Air Force military members, Air Force Reserve military members on active duty or inactive duty for training, and Air National Guard military members in Title 10 status is a violation of Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice.**

**Personal Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication**

Social media, and the use of electronic communication, encourages informal, sometimes intimate, and at times adversarial interactions. Generally, actions prohibited in person are not otherwise condoned or tolerated through social media or electronic communication. Airmen are accountable for their words and actions, including those conveyed by means of electronic communication.

1. Responsibilities

1.1. Military Members. All military members shall treat others with dignity, fairness, and respect at all times. Military members must remember:

1.1.1. Existing standards of professionalism apply to social media and electronic communication. The guidance found in AFI 36-2909, Professional and Unprofessional Relationships, applies to electronic communication and social media interactions by military members, on and off duty.

1.1.2. Existing standards of mutual respect apply to social media and electronic communication. The United States Government, the Department of Defense, and the Air Force will neither condone nor tolerate unlawful discrimination of any kind. The guidance found in AFI 36-2706, Equal Opportunity Program, Military and Civilian, applies to electronic communication and social media interactions, on and off duty for military members.

**2. Conduct. Failure by Regular Air Force members, Air Force Reserve members on active duty or inactive duty for training, and Air National Guard members in Title 10 status to obey the prohibitions of this paragraph is a violation of Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice.**

2.1. A military member will not, without legal justification or lawful authorization, knowingly distribute or broadcast a visual depiction of another identified or identifiable person, when:

2.1.1. The person depicted is engaging in sexually-explicit conduct or the depiction is of the private area of the person depicted; and

2.1.2. The depiction was originally produced under circumstances in which the person depicted had a reasonable expectation of privacy; and

2.1.3. When the distribution or broadcast was with the intent to realize personal gain, or with the intent to humiliate, harm, harass, intimidate, threaten, or coerce the depicted person, or with reckless disregard as to whether the depicted person would be humiliated, harmed, harassed, intimidated, threatened, or coerced; and

2.1.4. When the distributor or broadcaster knew, or should have known, that the depicted person did not consent to the distribution or broadcast.

This memorandum becomes void after one year has elapsed, upon publishing of a new publication permanently establishing this guidance, or upon being incorporated into an existing publication, whichever is earlier.

DANIEL R. SITTERLY  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

## **Terms**

**Broadcast** - Electronically transmit a visual image with the intent that it be viewed by a person or persons.

**Distribute is defined in Part IV, paragraph 45c, Manual for Courts-Martial, (2016 Edition).**

**Electronic Communication** - Transfer of information (signs, writing, images, sounds, or data) transmitted by computer, phone, or other electronic devices. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to: text messages, emails, chats, instant messaging, screensavers, weblogs, social media sites, electronic device applications, and web/video conferencing.

**Identifiable** - An individual may be identifiable from the depiction itself or from information conveyed in connection with the depiction. Whether an individual is identifiable is determined under the totality of the circumstances.

**Legal Justification or Lawful Authorization** - Concerning paragraph 2.1, legal justification or lawful authorization includes lawful law enforcement, correctional, or intelligence activity; a person reporting unlawful activity; or a subpoena or court order for use in a legal proceeding.

**Private Area is defined in Part IV, paragraph 45c, Manual for Courts-Martial, (2016 Edition)**

**Reasonable Expectation of Privacy** - Circumstances in which a reasonable person would believe that a private area or sexually-explicit conduct of the person would not be visible to the public. Paragraph 2.1 does not apply to a visual depiction of a person's voluntary engagement in sexually-explicit conduct or voluntary exposure of the person's own private area if such engagement or exposure takes place in public or in a lawful commercial setting.

**Social Media** - An online social platform or site used to share information, communicate, or build relationships.

**Sexually-Explicit Conduct is defined in Part IV, paragraph 68b, Manual for Courts-Martial, (2016 Edition).**

**Visual Depiction is defined in Part IV, paragraph 68b, Manual for Courts-Martial, (2016 Edition).**